

WHAT IS URBAN FLOODING?

Urban flooding occurs when homes, yards, or streets are inundated with water from heavy rains or snow melt, damaging property, making travel difficult or dangerous. It also results from sewer water backing up through pipes into basements, and from water seeping through the foundation walls.



BEFORE THE EVENT

INSPECT YOUR HOME

- ✓ Remove leaves and debris from gutters, clear your storm drains and drainage areas of any debris or trash;
- ✓ Make sure that windows and doors are properly secured;
- ✓ Make sure your sump pump is working if you have one;
- ✓ If there's a risk of severe flooding in your area, move your valuable belongings to the upper floors;
- ✓ Raise your furnace, water heater, washer and dryer with bricks if they are in an area likely to be flooded;
- ✓ Bring possessions like lawn furniture, grills, and trash cans inside, or tie them down securely;

DURING THE WINTER

- ✓ Remove ice and snow from areas near drains and downspouts;
- ✓ If there is snow around your home's foundation, clear it before it melts. Moving snow just three to five feet away from the house may reduce the risk of water damage.

PREPARE A DISASTER KIT, INCLUDING:

- ✓ Fully charged cell phone
- ✓ Flash light (w/ fresh batteries)
- ✓ Water (1 gallon per day/per person)
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Multi-tool
- ✓ First aid
- ✓ Radio (hand crank powered if possible)
- ✓ Medication
- ✓ Personal hygiene materials
- ✓ Baby supplies (diapers, bottles, formula)
- ✓ Extra cash
- ✓ Pet supplies
- ✓ Family and emergency contact information
- ✓ Personal ID documents
- ✓ Emergency blanket
- ✓ Maps of the area
- ✓ Extra set of car and house keys
- ✓ Rain gear
- ✓ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ✓ Camera for photos of damage
- ✓ Important documents, including the deed to your home, your flood insurance, etc. in case your home is overwhelmed by water

DURING THE EVENT

IF FLOODWATER ENTERS YOUR PROPERTY

- ✓ Call your town. Even if they don't come out to your property, it is still important that they have a record of your flooding incident for future reference.
- ✓ If there's water in your home and a sump pump is ineffective, ensure that water stays away from outlets and other electrical sources. Carefully turn off your main electrical switch while standing on a dry, non-conductive surface such as heavy rubber, plastic, or dry wood.
- ✓ Be alert for gas leaks. If the water rises high enough to extinguish the pilot light on your water heater or furnace, it may be letting gas into the property. Turn off the gas supply to these units, if possible. Do not use candles, lanterns, or open flames in the area, and do not smoke until you are absolutely certain that leaking gas is not an issue.

A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS

IF THE WATERS START TO RISE INSIDE YOUR HOUSE BEFORE YOU HAVE EVACUATED:

- ✓ Retreat to the second floor, the attic, or, if necessary, the roof.
- ✓ Take dry clothing, cell phone, flashlights, and a portable radio with you.
- ✓ Don't try to swim to safety. Instead, wait for rescuers to come to you.
- ✓ If you decide to leave your property, do not walk through flooded areas. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- ✓ Make sure that you do not drive through a flooded area, two feet of water can sweep away a car. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. [More people drown in their cars than anywhere else.](#)
- ✓ Since electric currents pass easily through water, electrocution is another major cause of death during floods, so stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires.



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AFTER THE EVENT:

- ✓ Wait for the water to drain out of the property before reentering, and check for structural damage before you enter any buildings.
- ✓ When you do enter a building, do not use matches, cigarette lighters, or any other open flames, since gas may still be trapped inside. Instead, use a flashlight to find your way.
- ✓ Keep the power off until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- ✓ [Be very cautious of stepping into a flooded basement; deaths have been reported as a result of electrocution from currents in an inundated basement.](#)
- ✓ If your home, apartment, or business has suffered severe damage, immediately call the insurance company or agent who handles your flood insurance policy to file a claim. Even if you are not insured, make a written record of the date and time the flooding started and ended, and note the depth of the water. Document and photograph items that were damaged, and record their estimated value.
- ✓ If damage is severe, consider a professional cleaning service. If you are cleaning the property yourself, wear appropriate protection, such as rubber boots and gloves. Make sure to disinfect any affected areas with a solution of water and bleach (four tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water), always save receipts for out-of-pocket expenses on clean-ups.



DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A RAINREADY PLAN?

LEARN MORE AT
WWW.RAINREADY.ORG

RainReady is a program of the
Center for Neighborhood
Technology



REFERENCES: U. S. Department of Homeland Security. *Basic Safety Tips*. Retrieved from <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
American Red Cross. *Flood Safety Checklist*. (2009) Retrieved from http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4340128_Flood.pdf